

THE

Christian History ;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in *England Scotland and America.*

To be publish'd *Weekly* ;

Saturday MARCH 12. 1743. N^o. 2.

The Rev. Mr. ROBE's Preface finished.

4thly. **I**T is not to be forgotten, that in *New-England*, where Hundreds were affected in their Bodies, the same Way several with us are; the most Part of those who were thought to be convicted, have continued now for *some Year* to profess serious Religion, and to practise it without returning to their former Follies. And shall we not hope the same of these converted amongst us, seeing also they have continued for several Months or Weeks, since they appeared to be converted, in a desirable Way? Especially when some Parts of the most refined and uncommon Morality have been practised by them, of which some Instances may be given in the following *Narrative*.

I forbear to give Instances from the Holy Scriptures, of Things exactly similar to these bodily Distresses in our Case, seeing I have already referred to Mr. *Edwards's* Sermons. Only it is surprizing, that some reason, as if they had never read the History in the 2d. of the *Acts*, or the *Taylor*, or *Felix* trembling, and of the Conversion of the holy Apostle *Paul*; and as if they found in their Bibles positive Declarations, that the Lord would never to the End of the World, suffer Sinners to cry out, tremble, faint, or fall down astonished, under a Work of Conviction, and Apprehension of his just and dreadful Wrath.

B

Lastly,

Lastly, I seriously beg of any who are prejudiced against this Dispensation of God's extraordinary Grace, and look upon it as Delusion, that they'll shew themselves so charitable and good, as to direct me and other Ministers what we shall answer distressed Persons of all Ages, who come to us crying bitterly that they are lost and undone, because of Unbelief and their other Sins; *What shall we do to be saved?* And as a young Girl about *Twelve*, who had been in Distress for some Time, called for me to a separate Place in a House where I was, and asked me with great Sedateness, *What shall I do to get Christ?* Shall we tell them they are not Christless and Unconverted, when we evidently see many of them to be such? Shall we tell them that their Fear of the Wrath of God is all but Delusion, and that it is no such dreadful Thing as they need to be so much afraid of it? Shall we tell Persons lamenting their Cursing, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and other Immoralities, That it is the Devil who makes them now see these Evils to be offensive to God, and destructive to their Souls? Shall we tell them who under the greatest Uneasiness enquire of us, "What they shall do to get an Interest and Faith in Jesus Christ," That Satan is deluding them, when they have or shew any Concern this Way? In fine, Shall we pray and recommend it to them, to pray to God to deliver them from such Delusions? It would be worse than *Devilish*, to treat the Lord's sighing and groaning Prisoners at this Rate. And yet such Treatment is a natural Consequence of reckoning this the Work of the Devil, and a Delusion.

There are only two other Objections I shall endeavour to take off because they are popular, and have reached even unto us.

The first is taken from the Notoriety and Observableness of this Work. They object that it cannot be the Work of the *Holy Ghost*, and any real true Conversion which is so open to publick Notice, and makes so much Noise; for our Lord saith, *Luke xvii. 20. The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation.*

It is Matter of Wonder, that this Objection should have its Rise from them who should be able, and careful to look beyond the Translation to the Original: And if they have, it's not consistent with Honesty, to make such an Objection; seeing they cannot but know that the *Greek Word* refers to such

such EARTHLY Pomp, Grandeur of Equipage, and Attendance wherewith earthly Kings used to make their publick Appearances ; or as our Translators give the Word otherwise upon the Margin, *with outward Show*. Beza's Note upon this Scripture, is both short and good, and therefore I give the Meaning of it rather in his Words than my own. " *The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation*, That is, With any outward Pomp and Shew of Majesty to be known by : For there were otherwise many plain and evident Tokens, whereby Men might have understood, that Christ was the *Messias*, whose Kingdom was so long looked for : But he speaketh in this Place of those Signs which the *Pharisees* dreamed of, who looked for an EARTHLY Kingdom of the *Messias*." Our Lord doth not in the least insinuate, that the Coming of the Kingdom of God in the Conversion of *Jews and Gentiles*, was to be silently set up without Noise and unobserved, for this would have been contrary to Fact. Did not the Spirit's Work of Conversion at *Samaria* quickly reach the Ears of the Church at *Jerusalem* ? Were not the Conversions from Paganism to Christianity with Observation ? Is any notoriously profane and wicked Person in any Congregation convicted, and his Life reformed without Observation ? The Remark of the Rev. Mr. *Cooper* in his Preface to Mr. *Edwards's* Sermon formerly quoted, is very just : After mentioning the uncommon Appearances accompanying this Work ; He says, " If it were not *thus*, the Work of the Lord would not be so much regarded and spoken of ; and so God would not have so much of the Glory of it : Nor would the Work itself be like to speed so fast ; for God hath evidently made Use of Example and Discourse in carrying it on. May a sovereignly gracious God make his Work soon appear to his Servants through the whole Land, and his Glory unto their Children. May the heavenly Influence like Lightning fly from Congregation to Congregation, alarming every unconverted Sinner, and filling their Hearts and Lips with importunate Enquiries, *What shall we do to be saved* ?

The second Objection is taken from those called *Camizars*, a Part of the barbarously persecuted and oppressed *Protestants* in *France* after the *Revocation* of the *Edict of Nantes*. They appeared in the *Cevennes*, a barren and desert Country. There were a Number among them who pretended to Inspiration : and if the Accounts we have of them be genuine, by that Inspi-

ration they gave Exhortations to Repentance, and foretold several Things which the Event hath proved *false* (c). Other Things are reported of them that there is Reason to believe were *fictitious*. Many of them came over to *London* about and after the Year 1702. The History of whom was given in English by one *Lacy*, which hath been handed about here by some *Enemies to this Work of God*. They were under frequent bodily Agitations, Convulsions and extraordinary Motions; and it is pretended that their Case is the same with ours, and seeing they were under Delusion, this must be a Delusion also.

To satisfy such who have been practised upon; I would have them to observe *first*, that as those bodily Agitations are *no Evidence* of Persons being under any Operations of the *Spirit of God*, else all the Persons under Convulsions, Cramps, Hysterisms, &c. would be such; so upon the other Hand they are *no Evidence* that these thus affected are under a *Spirit of Delusion*: For several of the Prophets of old had sometimes extraordinary Motions upon their Bodies; and many have them in the Way of bodily Diseases, which Physicians say proceed from natural Causes. So that the Bodily Agitations considered in themselves, are no Symptoms of Persons being under the Influence either of a good or bad Spirit.

There is the *greatest Disparity & Unlikeness* between the Case of the *Camizars* and these affected among us. The *Camizars* had their bodily Agitations from a *supernatural Power*, as they declare in the forefaid Book of *Lacy's*. The Distresses upon the Bodies of *our People* proceed in a *natural Way* from the great Fear of God's Wrath wherewith their Minds are seized because of a State of Unbelief they are deeply convinced of. The *Camizars* pretended *Inspiration*; & if what they declared of themselves be true, they *understood not* sometimes what they uttered, *neither* did they *remember* it afterwards: Their Organs were moved and used in Speaking, by some supernatural Power, without their own Will and Influence of their natural Powers. *None* of *our People* ever pretended in the least to *Inspiration*; they give a *rational Account* of themselves, *know* and *remember* what they say and do. The *Camizars* continued *many Years*

(c) These were the same which are called by some, *The French Prophets*.

under their bodily Agitations whenever their pretended Inspirations seized them; and these did *not* proceed from any Apprehension of the *Wrath of God* due to them because of their *Sins*. Our People are delivered from these bodily Distresses, which do *not* return upon them again, when they are delivered from their Fears. Among the *Camizars* their pretended inspired Teachers were only affected, and that while they were uttering their Revelations. Amongst us only some of our Hearers, who thro' the Power of the *Holy Spirit*, are by the Word convinced of their Sin and Danger. The Exhortations of the *Camizars* to Repentance and Amendment of Life, were without any Mixture of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, and the Principles, Means, and Motives to Repentance revealed therein. (d) In ours a Work of Conviction is distinctly carried on to a Work of saving Conversion in many, according to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and by the Influence thereof.

After this fair Stating of the Difference between the *Camizars* and the spiritually Distress'd among us, I leave it to the impartial Reader to judge whether there is the least Shadow of Reason to compare this Work to the Delusion of the *Camizars*. And if it be not the most unfair Dealing to do so in a general Way to the stumbling of weak People; while they themselves cannot but know if they look'd at all into the History of those People, that there is no such Likeness between their Case and that of ours as to warrant the Objection. There are now, blessed be the Lord, many Instances in several Corners of this

(d) Agreeable to this Observation; The Rev. Mr. Prince has given us the following Piece of History, which we think convenient to insert in this Place, viz. 'I have heard one of the pretended French Prophets hold forth at London about the Year 1710: And in his Discourse, there was no Method, nothing instructive, nothing searching; nothing but vehement Outcries, expressed in GENERAL TERMS — as Repent, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand, or the Judgments of GOD will suddenly come down upon you, &c. without any Explication of the Nature of true Repentance, or saving Faith; nor any Thing about Original Sin, nor of the Decets of the Heart, nor of Justification, nor of the Work of Conviction or Regeneration; nor any Explication of any Part of the Gospel Schema of Redemption by the Mediation, the Sacrifice, the Righteousness, the Intercession, the Word and the SPIRIT of CHRIST.

Church,

Church, of a saving Work of Conversion, witnessing that this is the Work of the Spirit of God, and that the Kingdom of God is come nearer to us than ever.

[*The next eleven or twelve Paragraphs being an Address to the Brethren of the Secession in Scotland, we omit ; and go on with the rest of the Preface.*]

I had a prevailing Inclination from the Beginning, with all the Exactness I was capable of, to observe every Thing that past ; and with the most scrupulous Niceness, to examine every uncommon Circumstance, and to take down Notes of what appeared to me most material. I was encouraged and directed in this by some of great Judgment, and who justly have Influence upon me. This hath issued in a JOURNAL of what was most observable in the Case of many in this Congregation ; who have applied to me from Time to Time, for Instruction and Direction under their spiritual Distress (e).

The Judgment & Desire of Friends I value, have had considerable Weight with me to essay the following Narrative, with a Dependence upon the divine Assistance, and as the LORD shall permit. The Omission of our worthy Forefathers to transmit to Posterity, a full and circumstantial Account of the Conversion of 500 by one Sermon at the Kirk of *Shots* in the Year 1630 ; and of the Beginning and Progress of the extraordinary Out-letting of the Holy Spirit in the West of *Scotland* already mentioned, I have heard much complained of and lamented. And I cannot but think that if after such Complaints we are guilty of the same Neglect, we shall be more Blame-worthy before GOD, our own Consciences, and Posterity.

But that which most of all prevails with me is, that as I in the most express and deliberate Manner I can, design and intend it to the Praise and Glory of GOD, renouncing all other Ends contrary to this ; so I am persuaded it will by his Blessing contribute to it.

(e) It is earnestly wish'd by many, that all other Ministers, where Religion is revived, wou'd like wise apply themselves to write exact JOURNALS of the Rise and Progress of this Work among their People ; for a standing Testimony to the Glory of GOD.

Every godly One into whose Hands it may come, will doubtless find Matter of Praise from it to the LORD. Others who laboured under Mistakes about this Work, through Prejudices from Opinions they have entertained as to the Manner wherein the LORD might come to revive his Work in this Church; may possibly when they hear these Things, hold their Peace, and glorify GOD, saying, "then hath GOD also granted Repentance unto Life unto our Brethren whom we hated": As the Apostles & Church of *Jerusalem* did when they heard of the Conversion of the despised *Gentiles*. And doubtless others when they hear of the LORD's bringing so many of *Zion's Prisoners out of the fearful Pit and miry Clay*, and putting a new Song in their Mouths, even Praise to our GOD; shall by his Grace be brought to fear and trust in the LORD.

But Praise to our GOD, for these his mighty Acts, is not to be confined to the Generation wherein they appear. Posterity shall reap the Benefit of them, and it is our Duty to transmit the History of them to Posterity, that they may reap the greater Benefit by them, and praise the LORD more distinctly for them. It would be a Contempt of these wonderful Works which GOD hath made to be had in Remembrance, if they should be buried in *Oblivion*, so as not to be known by those who live in after Ages. One Generation should praise his Works to another, and should declare his mighty Acts. This we are expressly commanded to do, that after Generations may put their Trust in GOD and praise him. *Psal. cii. 18. This shall be written for the Generation to come, and the People which shall be created shall praise the Lord. Psal. lxxviii. 5, 6, & 7. For he established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a LAW in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers, that they should make them known to their Children. That the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be Born: Who should arise and declare them to their Children: that they might set their Hope in GOD, and not forget the WORKS of GOD.*

In this Narrative I propose to give an Account of this surprising Dispensation of Grace, in the Beginning, Progress and various Circumstances of it, with the strictest Regard to Truth in all the Exactness I can. A polished Stile is not to be expected from one, who must redeem Time from Eating and Sleeping to carry it on. To write intelligibly is all I aim at. I have no View of Leisure to publish above a Sheet of it once a Week

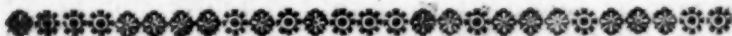
Week or Fortnight, and this is the Reason why it is not emitted at once. To serve the Truth and the Interests of Religion, and to satisfy the longing Curiosity of them, who are giving *Zion's KING* no rest until he make his *Jerusalem* a Praise in the midst of the Earth, are what I intended.

May the HOLY SPIRIT whose Work upon the Souls of many is to be narrated, accompany the Narrative with his powerful Influences ; that it may promote the REDEEMER's Interest, and make every Reader feel by his saving Operations that he is indeed come in an uncommon Way of Grace. And may this whole Church, and all the Ends of the Earth see greater Things than these. *Amen.*

Kilsyth, July 29th, 1742.

J. ROBE.

(The Rev. Mr. ROBE's Narrative will be begun in our next.)



In N^o. I. Page 8. line 19. read *evidently* converted.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

This Day is Published,

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And as there is a remarkable Uniformity in the Work of GOD, as it has appeared there and in this Country ; so this Performance is excellently suited to vindicate it from many of the Objections made against it among Us ; and is wrote in so scriptural and rational, so masterly and polite a Manner, that it is not doubted but it will be read with Approbation by the judicious and unprejudiced.

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